



# voice

vocational rehabilitation ■ disability determinations ■ independent living ■ personal care assistance

**W**hat is it like to move to a foreign country and find that it's the place you want to spend the rest of your life? Jie Downing knows exactly what it is like. Jie recently became an American citizen, and she explains in her own words how she got to where she is today and what that journey means to her.

— story by Jeffrey Whitford



Jie Downing, a Senior Counselor in the Jefferson City DD office, was born in the People's Republic of China. She has been in the U.S. since 1995 and recently became an American citizen.

**I was born** in the People's Republic of China and lived there until August of 1995. The University of Missouri-Columbia (MU) women's studies department needed somebody to teach a course on contemporary Chinese women writers during the fall semester of 1995. I was invited to teach that course and co-teach another course with a professor in the sociology department.

I came to Columbia, Mo., on Aug. 5, 1995, as a visiting scholar to MU. Columbia College offered me free boarding and food in exchange for my lectures on classic Chinese poetry in its English department. While teaching at MU, I played table tennis every Friday evening in their Table Tennis Club. I met and got to know the man who would be my future husband. We were married in January of 1996. After I was married, we moved to Jefferson City. This was a miracle for table tennis. Even 24 years after 1972's ►

## An American Citizen

incident, the USA and China were brought together again by table tennis!

I started my new life here as a housewife, a mother, a certified Medicaid aid, a billing specialist in a medical office, and working for a company that sells office equipment before finally becoming a DDS Counselor. Since 1996, I've been teaching part-time at Lincoln University and Stephens College introducing Chinese culture and language.

I fell in love with this new home and country where I am blessed with a family of my own and a career as challenging as teaching. I delayed the process of applying for citizenship due to the fact that my mother, who will be 70 next year, is still in

China. If I became an American citizen, I would have to get a visa from the Chinese government to visit her.

My father passed away two weeks after I left China in 1995. I was not able to attend his funeral and say goodbye to him, which has been a traumatic event in my life for a long while. I am very afraid that if something happens to my mother, like a stroke or heart attack, I will not be able to go back to China to see her in time due to the processing time of a visa application. However, how could I not become a U.S. citizen if I love this country so much to have a family, a home, and a career here? So I downloaded the forms from the Web, and mailed the citizenship forms, along with two money orders of about \$350 total — one for the application fee and the other for the fingerprints.

In May 2003, I was asked to go to the St. Louis Federal Building to have my fingerprints taken. After

passing through the strict security stations, I sat down in the waiting room with my friends and noticed that I had a thread coming out of my sleeve. I asked my friend if she had a knife with her. My friend burst into laughter and cried out, “Jie, here? A knife? You must be kidding!” I suddenly realized we just went through all those checkpoints and were *inside* a federal building. So I told the lady who was doing my

fingerprints, and she burst into laughter, too, and was kind enough to cut that piece of thread with a pair of scissors.

During the months that followed, many of my colleagues were challenged during their breaks and lunch time by the 100 questions

regarding U.S. history and English, as required by the INS, while I was preparing for the test to become a U.S. citizen. In September 2003, at the INS office in Kansas City, Mo., I made it through both the oral and the written tests with 100-percent accuracy. Thank God I was not asked to list the first 13 states. I would always miss one for some reason. A month after the test, I took the oath in the federal court of Kansas City, Mo., and became an official American citizen in October 2003. I even got a letter from President Bush congratulating me on making this choice.

The right to vote is the new and most important benefit for me in becoming a citizen. It took me only two minutes to make the decision to come to the U.S. to meet with an academic challenge, but it will take the rest of my life to live up to the spirit and pride of being part of the stripes and stars. God bless America! ■

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“I fell in love with this new home and country where I am blessed with a family of my own and a career as challenging as teaching.”

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The VR Voice is your voice. Please tell us how your newsletter can best serve you. What would you like to see in upcoming issues? Call Lisa Sone at (573) 526-7010; e-mail her at [lisa.sone@vr.dese.mo.gov](mailto:lisa.sone@vr.dese.mo.gov); or mail your ideas/comments to her attention at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, 3024 Dupont Circle, Jefferson City, MO 65109.

As many of you may or may not know, Ms. Elector Anthony passed away on Friday, March 5, 2004. It has been a difficult time for our office because we lost a person who was the “epitome” of the VR mission statement. If you did not know her, it will be a shame that this story is the only knowledge you will have of her.

OK, so what was her real name? I don’t know how many times she was called Electra, Electric, Electricity, Lector — even Saint Anthony. Ms. Elector Anthony was Ms. Elector Anthony. She consistently answered the call of Vocational Rehabilitation for more than 23 years. Despite her illness, Ms. Anthony continued

to maintain her high level of performance. When I came in as a “rookie” with VR, the first person I was connected with was Ms. Anthony. Fred Taylor had faith in her to provide me with the direction I needed to be a successful VR counselor. She had all the answers (or so it seemed). I mean, she would come out of nowhere with solutions to my most difficult cases. She would often make me feel like I had come up with the idea. Only after sitting awhile and being proud of my accomplishment did I realize that she deserved the credit.

She literally cared for her clients. Don’t get me wrong, there were some clients who just bounced on her last nerve. But visits to hospitals, allowing a client to take out a prosthetic eye and get comfortable, and sending birthday, get well and other cards was the norm for Elector. She sent personal birthday cards to clients when no one else remembered. There were many small things of great importance that she did anonymously. From her most severely disabled person to the least, she always gave them a chance to succeed or fail. Elector just had a sense about her that is hard to put into words.

After caring for her clients, Elector took great care in relationships with her co-workers. She would have listened to our problems for hours if we’d let her. There was never a day when she said, “I don’t want to hear it.” During the time she battled cancer, she continued to hack away at the daily rituals of doing a senior counselor’s work. Complaining was not a part of her being.

She avoided getting into arguments as much as possible. It was not necessary. Besides, who would want to argue with Ms. Anthony?

Catie Alexander, Senior Counselor, shares glimpses of her relationship with Elector: “Elector was my personal friend. Lunch with Elector was a ritual for me. We always started out with the topic of the ‘M.A.S.H. unit crisis center,’ which our job often resembled, and progressed to a lighter topic. We worked on behavioral issues of her rabbit and my cats for several years. The reason she was remarkable was that she used her religious faith to help her treat each person as a person equal to her.”

Aside from her job, Ms. Anthony had two daughters. She was relentless in making sure that they were provided for and had a stable foundation to work from. She knew her time was limited, but she reached her dream of seeing her daughters into young adulthood.

If Elector could speak today, we believe she would have one question: “Has everyone in your family gotten a mammogram?”

— By Teresa Nianga, District Supervisor,  
Kansas City Downtown VR office

*Affectionately submitted by the Kansas City  
Downtown Vocational Rehabilitation Office*

## Bringing HOPE to Missouri

Jane Boone, District Supervisor of the Florissant DD Office, served on a Social Security Administration (SSA) work group connected with the Homeless Outreach Planning and Evaluation (HOPE) project. The group was formed to oversee the congressional appropriation of 8 million dollars designated to community providers as grants.

The group’s primary goal was to improve upon outreach efforts to the homeless, particularly with regard to the Supplemental Security Insurance/Disability Insurance Benefits (SSI/DIB) application process. Grant money could be used in a variety of ways to assist SSA and Disability Determinations Services (DDS) in making

more complete and accurate disability determinations for homeless applicants.

Boone participated in a work group with nine other participants — five from DDS and five from various SSA areas. Their assignment was to create the training manual that will be used to educate the grant winners regarding the application process. The work group met in Baltimore, Md., to develop the 10 modules that will be covered in the training. Each member was assigned a module to develop; Boone was assigned the “Application Process” module. The training manual was presented to the grant awardees during August in Baltimore.

The work group experience was more than just an honor for Boone — it was a learning experience.

“The varied background and many years of experience that these work group members brought to the table really enhanced the experience both personally and professionally for me,” Boone says.

—by Jeffrey Whitford

## Employee Changes — September 2003 through July 2004

### New Hires:

**Georgeta Dacila**, a Billing Specialist I in the Jefferson City VR office.

**Rick Elliott**, a Mail Services Specialist I in Central Office.

**Gregory Hill**, a Counselor in the Kansas City Downtown VR office.

**Don Jackson**, a Counselor in the Chillicothe VR office.

**Rodney Petersen**, a Counselor in the Farmington VR office.

**Nichelle Pool**, a Secretary I in the Columbia VR office.

**Regina Rathert**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis Downtown VR office.

**Glenn Smith, Sr.**, a Counselor in the Kansas City Transition VR office.

**Monica Smith**, a Computer Information Tech Specialist (CIT) II in Central Office DD.

**Nikki Smith**, a Billing Specialist I in Central Office VR.

**Kristen Strickland**, a Counselor in the Kansas City Transition VR office.

**Christal Thomas**, a Counselor in the St. Charles VR office.

**Rachel Winter**, a Counselor in the St. Charles VR office.

**Sally Wood**, a Counselor in the Springfield South VR office.

### Transfers:

**Daniel Arland**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City South VR office, transferred to the Kansas City East VR office.

**Emily Borgel**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis Transition VR office, transferred to the St. Louis South VR office.

**Donna Conroy**, a Secretary III in the Kansas City South VR office, transferred to the Kansas City East VR office.

**Tessa Guffey**, a Senior Counselor in the Florissant DD office, transferred to the St. Louis South DD office.

**Greg Hale**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis Transition VR office, transferred to the St. Louis West VR office.

**Maureen Hentz**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City East VR office, transferred to the St. Louis North VR office.

**Melissa Hillig**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis Transition VR office, transferred to the St. Louis West VR office.

**Greg Howell**, an Intake Counselor in the St. Louis North VR office, transferred to the St. Louis West VR office.

**Chad Jones**, a Senior Counselor in the Kirksville VR office, transferred to the Columbia VR office.

**Kathy Karch**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City South VR office, transferred to the Kansas City East VR office.

**April Mason**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis Transition VR office, transferred to the St. Louis South VR office.

**Jeff McGarry**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis Downtown VR office, transferred to the St. Louis South VR office.

**Janis Miller**, the District Supervisor in the St. Louis Transition VR office, transferred to the St. Charles VR office.

**Karen Monroe**, an Administrative Assistant I in the St. Louis Transition

VR office, transferred to the St. Louis South VR office.

**Jennifer Mueller**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Charles VR office, transferred to the St. Louis Southwest VR office.

**Sue Murray**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis Transition VR office, transferred to the St. Louis South VR office.

**Amanda Perry**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis Transition VR office, transferred to the St. Louis West VR office.

**John Ryan**, Supervisor of Workforce Development/Ticket to Work in the Kansas City South VR office, transferred to the Kansas City East VR office.

**Roberta Rubin**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City South VR office, transferred to the Kansas City Downtown VR office.

**Tom Sampson**, a Senior Counselor in the Hannibal VR office, transferred to the Sedalia VR office.

**Dorothy Sneed**, a Secretary III in the St. Louis Transition VR office, transferred to the St. Louis West VR office.

**Matthew Staples**, a Counselor in the Sedalia VR office, transferred to the Columbia VR office.

**Cody Thomas**, a Counselor in the St. Louis Transition VR office, transferred to the St. Louis West VR office.

**Liz Tomes**, a Secretary II in the St. Louis Transition VR office, transferred to the St. Louis West VR office.

**Patrick Wheeler**, a Counselor in the St. Louis Transition VR office, transferred to the St. Louis West VR office.

**Clarence Wiedel**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City South VR office, transferred to the Kansas City East VR office.

**Toni Williams**, a Secretary I in the Kansas City South VR office, transferred to the Kansas City Downtown VR office.

## Promotions:

**Lois Bobbett**, a Senior Counselor in the Springfield DD office, promoted to Professional Relations Specialist.

**Jane Boone**, an Assistant District Supervisor in the Florissant DD office, promoted to District Supervisor.

**John Broom**, an Assistant District Supervisor in the Cape Girardeau DD office, promoted to District Supervisor in the St. Louis South DD office.

**Sarah Clardy**, Assistant Director of Management Services in Central Office VR, promoted to Director of Management Services.

**Kelly Flaughner**, Director of Management Services in Central Office VR, promoted to Coordinator of Independent Living Services.

**Robin Hager-DeBraal**, an Accountant III, promoted to Assistant Director of Management Services in Central Office VR.

**Sue Hanes**, a CIT Trainee in Central Office VR, promoted to CIT I.

**Peggy Hart**, a Billing Specialist II in the Kansas City Transition VR office, promoted to Secretary III.

**Barb Hoelzer**, a District Supervisor in the St. Louis Southwest VR office, promoted to Regional Director in the St. Louis Regional VR office.

**Katrice Kendle**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis South DD office, promoted to Professional Relations Specialist.

**Lori Lane**, a CIT II in the Jefferson City DD office, promoted to CIT III in Central Office DD.

**Jeanne Loyd**, Coordinator of Rehabilitation Services in Central

Office VR, promoted to Assistant Commissioner of Vocational Rehabilitation.

**Carla Luebbert**, an Administrative Assistant I in Central Office DD, promoted to CIT Trainee in the Jefferson City DD office.

**Scott Mantooth**, Assistant Director of Personnel and Training in Central Office VR, promoted to Human Resources Manager.

**Lynn Norton**, a Billing Specialist II in the Kansas City DD office, promoted to Secretary III.

**Jackie O' Dell**, Assistant Director of Accounting, Independent Living / Personal Assistance Services in Central Office VR, promoted to Director of Independent Living Services.

**Edith Gale Purnell**, a Secretary I in the St. Louis West VR office, promoted to Billing Specialist II.

**Pam Robertson**, a CIT I in the Kansas City DD office, promoted to CIT II.

**Brenda Simmons**, a District Supervisor in the Kansas City Transition VR office, promoted to Regional Director in the Kansas City Regional VR office.

**Jesse Sitzes**, a Director in the Farmington VR office, promoted to District Supervisor.

**Dana Taylor**, a Senior Counselor in the Cape Girardeau DD office, promoted to Professional Relations Specialist.

## The following VR Counselors have been promoted to Senior VR Counselors:

**Karen Bailey**, Kansas City East

**Stacy Brady**, Kansas City North

**Lorrie Chaffin**, Joplin

**Melissa Cox**, Jefferson City

**Keri Edwards**, Sedalia

**Scott Evanowski**, Kirksville

**April Mason**, St. Louis South

**Rachel Mullins**, Kansas City North  
**Lilian Osa-Edoh**, St. Louis Downtown

**Peggy Ottersbach**, St. Charles

**David Showalter**, Kansas City  
Downtown

**Virginia Stollings**, Kansas City North

**Christine Storlie**, West Plains

**Denise Weaver**, Jefferson City

**Leslie White**, Chillicothe

## The following DD Counselors have been promoted to Senior DD Counselors:

**Stacy Bell**, Kansas City

**Geraldine Boeger**, St. Louis South

**Shannon Caldwell**, Springfield

**Patricia Chaplin**, St. Louis South

**Catherine Cochran**, Springfield

**Jennifer Hamby**, Cape Girardeau

**Melinda Huggins**, Cape Girardeau

**Kim Kaemmerer**, St. Louis South

**Kelly Landre**, Florissant

**Sarah Lemons**, Springfield

**Megan Marchi**, Cape Girardeau

**Maggie McClafflin**, Kansas City

**Jeremy McMurray**, Cape Girardeau

**Cheryl Patrick**, Florissant

**Gretchen Plate**, Florissant

**Eric Smith**, Florissant

**JoEtta Snell**, Cape Girardeau

**Aaron Spratt**, Cape Girardeau

**Heather Styer**, Cape Girardeau

**Cody West**, Springfield

## Resignations:

**Gwendolyn Bailey**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City DD office.

**Cheryl Baugh**, a Hearing Officer in the St. Louis South DD office.

**Tiffany Bowman**, a Counselor in the Jefferson City DD office.

**Machelle Cleaveland**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Charles VR office.

**Rebecca Craig**, a Senior Counselor in the Florissant DD office.

**Jilann Cummins**, a Senior Counselor in the Florissant DD office.

**Rebecca Davis**, a Senior Counselor in the Florissant DD office.

**Lori Deering**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis South DD office.

**Sahar Dorris**, a Professional Relations Specialist in the Cape Girardeau DD office.

**Sherie Downton**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City DD office.

**Edward Fick**, a Supervisor in the St. Louis South DD office.

**Steven Fritts**, a Senior Counselor in the Springfield North VR office.

**Karen Golden**, a Counselor in the Cape Girardeau DD office.

**Angela Green**, a Senior Counselor in the Jefferson City DD office.

**Kirstian Griggs-Bruhn**, a Secretary II in the Springfield DD office.

**Melinda Hicks**, a Secretary III in the Springfield North VR office.

**Salvador Irizzary**, a Senior Counselor in the Springfield DD office.

**Debra Jenkins**, a Billing Specialist I in the Jefferson City VR office.

**Joanna Jones**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City East VR office.

**Karen Kampeter**, a Senior Counselor in the Jefferson City DD office.

**Melissa Kritzer**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City DD office.

**Kenya Lockamy**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City DD office.

**Kimberlyn MacDonald**, a Senior Counselor in the Florissant DD office.

**Joshua McAlister**, a Counselor in the Florissant DD office.

**Kandace Moore**, a Counselor in the St. Louis Downtown VR office.

**Michelle Morrison**, a Senior Counselor in the Cape Girardeau DD office.

**Shelly Morse**, a Senior Counselor in the Columbia VR office.

**Yolanda Mosby**, a Secretary I in the St. Louis South DD office.

**Lavonda Murray**, a Billing Specialist II in Central Office VR

**Kristal Myers**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City DD office.

**Teresa Nicaastro**, a Secretary II in the St. Louis Southwest VR office.

**Jennifer Nolte**, a Senior Counselor in the Jefferson City DD office.

**Mary Jane Ordway**, Assistant Director in Central Office VR.

**Betty Richardson-Clark**, a Counselor in the St. Louis South DD office.

**Julie Sapp**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis South DD office.

**Wanda Shull**, a Senior Counselor in the Joplin VR office.

**Kristin Strickland**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City Transition VR office.

**Leslie White**, a Senior Counselor in the Chillicothe VR office.

## Retirements:

**Larry Allen**, District Supervisor of the Kansas City Downtown VR office, retired July 31, 2004, with more than 25 years of service.

**Suzi Brown**, a Hearing Officer in the Jefferson City DD office, retired May 31, 2004, with 27 years of service.

**Sheila Dessieux**, a Supervisor in the Jefferson City DD office, retired May 31, 2004, with more than 23 years of service.

**Alice Geary**, Assistant Director of Program Evaluation in the St. Louis South VR office, retired Jan. 31, 2004, with almost 36 years of service.

**Dyann Green**, Supervisor of Workforce Development in the Career Center office in Columbia Mo., retired Jan. 31, 2004, with more than 21 years of service.

**Barbara Greenawalt**, a Secretary II in the Kansas City DD office, retired Oct. 31, 2003, with more than 10 years of service.

**Norma Hauschild**, a Secretary III in the Kansas City Transition VR office, retired Feb. 29, 2004, with more than 26 years of service.

**Donna Hilton**, a Professional Relations Specialist in the Springfield DD office, retired June 30, 2004, with almost 23 years of service.

**Bonita Mackedanz**, a Receptionist and Information Specialist III in the Kansas City DD office, retired Jan. 31, 2004, with almost 23 years of service.

**James Meek**, a Hearing Officer in the Kansas City DD office, retired Oct. 31, 2003, with more than 27 years of service.

**Joan Pisani**, a Secretary II in the St. Louis West VR office, retired Dec. 31, 2003, with more than 23 years of service.

**Sherri Redding**, a Director of Program Evaluation in the Kansas City Transition VR office, retired May 31, 2004, with more than 29 years of service.

**Greg Solum**, a Director of Community Rehab Programs in Central Office VR, retired July 31, 2004, with more than 27 years of service.

**Linda Sullins**, a Secretary II in the Kansas City DD office, retired Jan. 31, 2004, with more than 31 years of service.

**Ron Vessell**, Assistant Commissioner in Central Office, retired Dec. 31, 2003, with more than 27 years of service.

In this section, consumers, partners/suppliers and division employees can voice their opinions, views, or recognition of our division and staff. Some letters will be printed in their entirety while longer letters might only have excerpts printed. Consumers' names are omitted to protect their confidentiality. All letters are subject to editing.

## Dear Shannon Caldwell:

Hello again, I just wanted to take a little more of your time to tell you thank you. I know that you worked so hard to help us out. I am sure that you face bureaucratic hassles each day, but your fight is not in vein, at least not in this case. I really appreciated that you kept me up to date constantly and did not hesitate to contact me whenever you needed information. I also appreciated your straightforwardness and letting us know what may or may not happen. It is hard to find a "straight-shooter." For me all I really wanted was people to tell me thanks for doing a good job for them. So, my wife and I want to thank you for your relentless efforts, adaptable measures, and just straight-down-to-it hard work for getting my case approved. **Thank you, thank you, thank you.**

***Shannon Caldwell is a Counselor in the Springfield DD office.***

**Dear Ms. Esther Smith  
(Assistant District Supervisor,  
Florissant DD office):**

It was very nice meeting you this afternoon. I thank you for your

time and effort that was afforded me today ...

In early April 2003, I first met your Senior Counselor, Ms. Sharon Houchins. I had come to meet her to file for disability with SSA. During my first meeting with Ms. Houchins, I was impressed by her sincere appreciation she had for her job as a Senior Counselor. In all of my meetings with Ms. Houchins, she has displayed love for her work, asked questions to make sure I was assisted properly, and delivered actual facts of what was needed. She did this with professional and caring magnitude coupled with enthusiastic duty.

***Sharon Houchins is a Senior Counselor in the Florissant DD office.***

**Dear Mr. Vessell  
(former Assistant Commissioner):**

This letter is intended to thank your organization and to particularly praise one of your counselors. I will be graduating college with my bachelor's degree in electronics engineering technology thanks to a couple of very special people in the St. Joseph VR office. Three years ago, I first met with Yvonne Wright to apply for educational assistance. She was very helpful and introduced me to my counselor, Kevin West. Kevin has met with me and supported my educational efforts throughout my college experience. He has treated me with the utmost respect, consideration, and compassion, along with his distinguished professionalism. He has been both available and helpful when problems arose.

I believe Kevin West is to be commended for his dedication and hard work with his clients. My grade point average is very high, along with receiving numerous awards for my academics. Yes, I was the one going to class and doing the work, but the support I received from Kevin and his office was the foundation allowing me to focus on studies. Personally, I have never felt better about myself. This degree is part of me now and should help me in a career that I could recently only dream about. VR and Kevin West have been a big part of that transformation and for that I am grateful.

In closing, let me say that I am writing this letter of my own accord, and that Kevin doesn't even know I'm doing it.

**A follow-up note from the client to Kevin West and Yvonne Wright:**

**Hi Yvonne and Kevin:**

I was offered a job with Mo-American Water Co., and I accepted. My position is "Control Systems Specialist." My education and degree opened the door to this opportunity. I am so excited! Thank you both for supporting me in this life changing experience. It has been great working with you. I didn't know anyone could feel this good.

***Kevin West is a Senior Counselor, and Yvonne Wright is a District Supervisor. They both work in the St. Joseph VR office.***

## Correction

In the last issue of the *Voice*, two job titles were listed incorrectly. Actually, Barbara Fast is a Secretary I in the Springfield South VR office, and Elizabeth Smith is a Counselor in the Cape Girardeau VR office. We apologize for the error.

## Howell Valley R-1 School District Appreciates Donation From Cape Girardeau DD Office

A new computer operating system in the Cape Girardeau DD office gave the division the opportunity to help advance the quality of education in a local school system. The Cape Girardeau DD office gave 78 computers to the Howell Valley R-1 School District. Carla Young headed up the effort to assist the school district.

"It made all of us here at the office feel good knowing that the computers were going to help a school district that was in real need," Young says. "The school was so excited to finally be able to have computers in each of their classrooms."

The president of the school district's board of education, Michael Moore, and Casus Baird, superintendent of schools, praised the staff at the Cape DD office for their effort in helping transfer the computers. Both men noted that in this time of budget reductions and technology shortfalls, such a donation is most beneficial in meeting the goals of quality education.

Howell Valley students from kindergarten through sixth-grade showed their appreciation through cards that they made and sent to the DD office.

— by Jeffrey Whitford

## VR Communication Intern Moves On

Jeffrey Whitford, the division's communication intern from January 2003 through May 2004, recently graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a bachelor's degree in journalism with an emphasis in advertising and a minor in psychology.

Jeffrey left his internship to pursue his career options. Fortunately, Jeffrey left behind his innovative ideas and creative artistry in many division publications.

Good luck, Jeffrey. Your talents will take you far. ■

## VR Takes Awards at the June 2004 Missouri Rehabilitation Association Conference



Charles Kimberlin (left), District Supervisor of the West Plains VR office, received the Counselor of the Year award from Fred Potter, a representative of the Missouri Rehabilitation Counselor Association and former VR counselor.



Heidi Robinson (left), Secretary III in the Sedalia VR office, received the Secretary of the Year award from Karen Wilson, District Supervisor of the Sedalia office.



Wendy Moore (right), President of MRA, presented the 2004 President's Award to VR. Timothy Gaines, Coordinator, Development and Consumer Affairs, accepted the award.

## Service Awards

We are fortunate to have so many talented and inspirational co-workers. Please take a moment to recognize and congratulate the following staff for years of dedicated service to our division.

### Five Years

**Monica Bax**, Senior Counselor  
— Jefferson City DD office

**Michelle Crismas**, Senior Counselor  
— Springfield DD office

**Patricia Dothage**, Senior Counselor  
— Kansas City DD office

**Judy Dunn**, Secretary II — St. Louis  
West VR office

**Suzanne Falk**, Senior Counselor  
— Springfield DD office

**Sharon Falter**, Senior Counselor  
— Jefferson City DD office

**Matthew Ferris**, Senior Counselor  
— Florissant DD office

**Matt Haeffner**, Senior Counselor  
— Jefferson City DD office

**Danielle Hernandez**, Senior  
Counselor — Kansas City DD office

**James Higgins**, District Supervisor  
— Kirksville VR office

**Kimberly Hulett**, Secretary II —  
Kansas City DD office

**Jennifer Kenkel**, Senior Counselor  
— Springfield DD office

**Eunice King**, Secretary II —  
Florissant DD office

**Kathy Kufskie**, Senior Counselor  
— Florissant DD office

**Amy Libbert**, Senior Counselor  
— Jefferson City DD office

**Sharon Loveland**, Senior Counselor  
— Sedalia VR office

**Becky McClure-Hopkins**, Senior  
Counselor — Springfield DD office

**Paula Morgan**, Senior Counselor  
— Florissant DD office

**Leah Rowe**, Senior Counselor  
— Kansas City North VR office

**Lisa Shirley-Boone**, Senior Counselor  
— Cape Girardeau DD office

**Diane Thompson**, Administrative  
Assistant I — Central Office VR

**Jean Underberg**, Senior Counselor  
— Cape Girardeau DD office

**Tandy Weger**, Senior Counselor  
— Kansas City DD office

**Keven Worthington**, Senior  
Counselor — Springfield DD office

### 10 Years

**Patricia Dodson**, Secretary II —  
Kansas City DD office

**Tracey Lawson**, Billing Specialist II  
— St. Louis South DD office

**Michael Schiffner**, Assistant District  
Supervisor — Springfield DD office

**Karen Surface**, Secretary II — Cape  
Girardeau DD office

**Patricia Walkowski**, Senior  
Counselor, Florissant DD office

**Barbara Watkins**, Secretary II —  
Kansas City East VR office

### 15 Years

**James Ankrom**, District Supervisor  
— Kansas City North VR office

**Connie Ball**, Secretary III —  
Springfield DD office

**Penni Bartram**, Secretary III — St.  
Joseph VR office

**Mary Bueker**, Administrative  
Assistant I — Central Office VR

**Donna Conroy**, Secretary III —  
Kansas East VR office

**Betty Dunn**, Secretary II — Cape  
Girardeau DD office

**Linda Fick**, Computer Information  
Tech Specialist — Central Office VR

**Charles Herrmann**, Senior Counselor,  
St. Louis South DD office

**Cozett Hill**, Administrative Assistant  
I — Kansas City DD office

**Jan Kobzej**, Senior Counselor —  
St. Joseph VR

**Jeanne Loyd**, Assistant  
Commissioner — Central Office

**Joel Stephenson**, Computer  
Information Tech Specialist — Central  
Office VR

**Rich Walker**, Assistant Director,  
Independent Living — Springfield  
South VR office

**Keith White**, Assistant Director,  
Personal Assistance Services (PAS)  
— Springfield South VR office

### 20 Years

**Janet Broaden**, Hearing Officer—  
Florissant DD office

**Leslie Garcia**, Regional Manager  
— St. Louis West VR office

**Pam Goodin**, Administrative  
Assistant I — Cape Girardeau DD  
office

**Penny Murphy**, Senior Counselor  
— Jefferson City DD office

**Carolyn Otterson**, Assistant Director,  
PAS — St. Louis South VR office

**Therese Roseburrough**, Professional  
Relations Officer (PRO) — Kansas  
City DD office

**Susan Solum**, Assistant District  
Supervisor — Springfield DD office

**Lyman Trachsler**, Director, PAS  
— Sedalia VR office

**Brenda Troop**, Quality Assurance  
Specialist — Kansas City DD office

### 25 Years

**Dennis Bills**, Senior Counselor  
— Springfield DD office

**Joyce Carter**, Assistant District  
Supervisor — Florissant DD office

**Wayne Gillam**, Director, Claimant Services, Central Office DD

**William Lentini**, Hearing Officer — St. Louis South DD office

**Deborah Moad**, Secretary II — Jefferson City DD office

**Sheila Simon**, Secretary III — St. Louis West VR office

**Debra Tyberendt**, Quality Assurance Specialist — St. Louis South DD office

**Clarinda Unger**, Coordinator, Client Services — Central Office VR

**Michele Van Wechel**, Secretary III — Jefferson City DD office

## 30 Years

**Dorothy Haralson**, Secretary III — Springfield DD office

**Sharon Houchins**, Senior Counselor — Florissant DD office

**Arlene Schnurbusch**, Secretary III — Cape Girardeau DD office

## Staff Achievements

**Larry Brady**, a Counselor in the Columbia VR office, became a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) in December 2003.

**Kimberly Conrad**, a Counselor in the Springfield North VR office,

became a Provisional Licensed Professional Counselor (PLPC) in May 2004. Also in May, she received third place on a poster presentation of her master's thesis, "Personality Correlates of Treatment Mode and Later Usage in Violators of Campus Alcohol Policies," at the Missouri Psychological Association annual conference in Columbia.

**Alise Dodds**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City North VR office, became a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in August 2004.

**Tim Gravier**, a Assistant District Supervisor in the St. Louis West VR office, became an LPC in December 2003.

**Kathy Kelly**, Senior Counselor in the Jefferson City VR office, became an LPC in January 2004.

**Charles Kimberlin**, District Supervisor of the West Plains VR office, was presented the "Counselor of the Year" award at the Missouri Rehabilitation Association (MRA) conference in June 2004.

**Michelle Mason**, a Counselor in the Sedalia VR office, became an LPC in July 2004.

**Jackie O'Dell**, Assistant Director of Accounting, Independent Living/ Personal Assistance Services in Central Office VR, received a

plaque for her participation and contributions as a member of the \$how-Me Loans Application Review Committee (LARC) at the Governor's Council on Disability Recognition Luncheon on April 27, 2004, as part of the Power Up 2004 Conference held at Tan-Tar-A.

**Jay Robertson**, District Supervisor in the Kansas City East VR office, was awarded the 2003 Community Partnership Award from Jewish Vocational Service, a Community Rehabilitation Provider, on Nov. 20, 2003.

**Heidi Robinson**, Secretary III in the Sedalia VR office, was awarded "Secretary of the Year" at the 2004 MRA conference held in June.

**Brenda Simmons**, Regional Director in the Kansas City Regional VR office, received the 2003 Community Partnership Award from Jewish Vocational Service, a Community Rehabilitation Provider, on Nov. 20, 2003.

**Melissa Steele-Lufcy**, District Supervisor of the Springfield South VR office, became an LPC in April 2004.

**Darrell Wilson**, a Counselor in the Joplin VR office, became a CRC in September 2003 and an LPC in October 2003.

## Changes Changes Changes

A change in your life or situation may mean you need to update your personnel file. If you have any of the following types of changes, please notify Donna Schepers, Resource Analyst for VR, at [donna.schepers@vr.dese.mo.gov](mailto:donna.schepers@vr.dese.mo.gov), or Terri Haake, Resource Analyst for DD, at [theresa.haake@vr.dese.mo.gov](mailto:theresa.haake@vr.dese.mo.gov).

- Address change
- Marital status (marriage/divorce)
- Name change
- Health or life insurance changes (acquiring/dropping dependents)
- Change of beneficiaries
- Maternity leave
- Surgery or hospitalization
- Workers' Compensation injuries
- W-4 or W-5 changes
- Leave without pay (needs prior approval) ■

## Mission Champion Award Continues

**R**ecommended by VR's Capacity Team, the Mission Champion Award recognizes exemplary employees who go above and beyond the agency's mission by performing outstanding service. The award is based on the employee assisting other staff, consumers, and/or partners in exceeding the mission in customer service, employment outcomes, case management, or other services as deemed appropriate by the employee's immediate supervisor.

Any employee is eligible to receive the award once a year. Award winners receive two hours of administrative leave, and the Assistant Commissioner congratulates all recipients. All staff may make nominations via e-mail or letter to the nominee's immediate supervisor. The nomination should describe how the employee exceeded the agency's mission. With so many award winners, it is easy to see the value we place on each other's hard work and dedication. Quality people provide quality service.

### September 2003

|             |                              |                     |
|-------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Andrea Kish | Senior Counselor             | St. Louis South DD  |
| Pam Schleif | Administrative Assistant III | Kansas City East VR |

### October 2003

|                     |                               |                     |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Brad Bledsoe        | Senior Counselor              | Jefferson City DD   |
| Rebecca Craig       | Senior Counselor              | Florissant DD       |
| Sharon Houchins     | Senior Counselor              | Florissant DD       |
| Rebecca Largent     | Assistant District Supervisor | Columbia VR         |
| Cheryl Patrick      | Senior Counselor              | Florissant DD       |
| Jay Robertson       | District Supervisor           | Kansas City East VR |
| Valerie Schneider   | Secretary III                 | Florissant DD       |
| Brenda Wallingsford | Senior Counselor              | Florissant DD       |
| Mary White          | Assistant District Supervisor | Cape Girardeau DD   |

### December 2003

|               |                  |                        |
|---------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Cindy Bausola | Secretary I      | St. Louis Southwest VR |
| Terri Haake   | HR Analyst III   | Central Office DD      |
| Rebecca LaMar | Senior Counselor | Cape Girardeau DD      |
| Tom Wilson    | Senior Counselor | St. Joseph VR          |

### January 2004

|                           |                            |                    |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Veronica "Nicky" Hoxworth | Secretary III              | St Charles VR      |
| Kathy Julius              | Administrative Assistant I | St. Louis South VR |
| Karen Klenke              | District Supervisor        | St. Louis South VR |
| Beverly Lee               | Administrative Assistant I | St. Louis South DD |
| Duane Shumate             | District Supervisor        | Columbia VR        |

### March 2004

|                |                  |                    |
|----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Wendy Baggett  | Counselor        | St. Louis South DD |
| Sharon Steward | Senior Counselor | St. Louis South VR |
| Laura Wallen   | Senior Counselor | Sedalia VR         |

### April 2004

|                 |                  |                |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Barbara Tongate | Senior Counselor | Kansas City DD |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|

### May 2004

|                |                            |                   |
|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Mary Bueker    | Administrative Assistant I | Central Office VR |
| Deborah Fannon | Senior Counselor           | St. Joseph VR     |
| Diane Thompson | Administrative Assistant I | Central Office VR |

### June 2004

|                    |                             |                     |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Donna Conroy       | Secretary III               | Kansas City East VR |
| Jennifer Dennis    | Senior Counselor            | Cape Girardeau DD   |
| Patti Hill         | Administrative Assistant II | Central Office VR   |
| Megan Marchi       | Senior Counselor            | Cape Girardeau DD   |
| Sheila Simon       | Secretary III               | St. Louis West VR   |
| Lisa Shirley-Boone | Senior Counselor            | Cape Girardeau DD   |
| Lisa Sone          | Quality Manager             | Central Office VR   |
| Melanie Waldroff   | Billing Specialist II       | St. Joseph VR       |

### July 2004

|                   |                       |                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Mike Cook         | Director, Operations  | Central Office VR |
| Sherry Sissom     | Billing Specialist II | Cape Girardeau DD |
| Keven Worthington | Senior Counselor      | Springfield DD    |

## Let It Snow?

**R**emember the weather last February? If you don't, take a look at the scene outside the Chillicothe District Office on Feb. 5. A VR client, who was at the office to develop his Individualized Plan for Employment with Counselor Rosalee Suchsland, measured 11 inches of snow outside the office. He certainly was determined to move forward with his rehab process!

With next February right around the corner, will we soon be singing "Let It Snow"? ■



# Same People — Different Responsibilities

Over the past year, many VR employees, including Tim Gaines, Kelly Flaughter, and Sarah Clardy, have taken on different jobs and responsibilities. The following are their comments on what their new duties entail and what they look forward to accomplishing in their positions.



**Sarah Clardy**  
Director,  
Management Services

"The division's fiscal arena has experienced many changes in the past few years. While certainly difficult at times, working through these changes has provided an advanced understanding of our

programs, initiatives, and the funding sources that support the division. As a result, I have gained detailed knowledge of the division's internal accounting processes and the opportunity to work with division staff to recognize, understand, and improve them. This process has fostered working relationships with staff located throughout the state, which I hope to build on. I look forward to the goals and challenges that lie ahead and continuing to assist the division in making a positive difference in our community."

The *VR Voice* is published by the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, a division of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**D. Kent King**, Commissioner of Education

**C. Jeanne Loyd**, Assistant Commissioner,  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

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Fax: (573) 751-1441  
E-mail: [lisa.sone@vr.dese.mo.gov](mailto:lisa.sone@vr.dese.mo.gov)



**Timothy E. Gaines**  
Coordinator, Development  
and Consumer Affairs

"Jeanne [Loyd] asked me to assume working with the Community Rehabilitation Programs and Supported Employment Service Providers as well as the colleges, vocational programs, and proprietary schools that we work with.

Clarinda Unger and I will work together on these issues. Clarinda and the Regional Managers will handle all of the service delivery aspects of these programs. Willard Worts and I will be working on the technical issues related to accreditation, out-of-state training requests, consumer satisfaction, monitoring, and the agreements. Clarinda and I will have the privilege of serving as co-liaisons of the very active CRP/VR Team.

"This is a fairly new area for me, and I certainly have a lot to learn. I will be relying on the help of Jeanne, Clarinda, Patti Hill, the Regional Managers, and CRP/SESP staff around the state. I will still be working on my other assigned duties and feel honored to have such a wonderful staff (Patsy Helmig, Scott Mantooth, Terri Haake, Donna Schepers, Lisa Sone, Willard Worts, and Penny Phillips) to help with the many tasks of our section."



**Kelly Flaughter**  
Coordinator, Independent  
Living Services

"There is a terrific and dedicated group of VR employees that work with the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to carry out the Independent Living (IL) and Personal Assistance Services (PAS) programs. I look forward

to working more closely with these employees and the CIL staff to provide services to people with disabilities. In the past, I have been involved in the financial issues relating to IL and PAS and look forward to becoming more involved on the service side of the programs as well." ■

Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
*Making a positive difference through education and service*